

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

October 7, 2003

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Gatsas.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O’Neil, Lopez,
Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, and Forest

Absent: Aldermen Wihby and Thibault

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting was to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person would given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Anthony Poore, 15 Foxwood Circle, Manchester stated:

I am here tonight to voice my concerns and my interest in the discussions on the development taking place on Old Wellington Road. Some of you have been made aware of our concerns and some residents are also here with me. I forwarded a letter with some questions. It has been brought to our attention that there is a parcel of property, approximately 10 acres, that in conjunction with the parking garage the City is looking to sell in an effort to raise funds. We also understand that it appears to us there may be two baskets that you are looking towards. One basket obviously like I said being the parking garage and the second being Old Wellington Road. Our concern is as follows. Basically as we understand it it appears we are looking towards October 31 to get this line item included in our budget for the City for this year. Having said that we are at October 7. That does not leave a lot of time. We also understand that potentially this will be fast tracked. If it is going to be fast tracked in order to meet a deadline, a budgetary guideline, then our concern is that

the needs of the community will not be taken into account. We are particularly concerned, not only with the current development, the number of units, the impact both qualitatively and quantitatively in our neighborhood but we are also concerned about some abutting developments that are also going to take place there that are going to have a significant impact on the current traffic pattern, which as you know are not very good over there. It is extremely difficult to get out. As the father of one young child and soon to be the father of a second child, our children play in this community and they are going to be impacted drastically. Basically I am here to voice my concerns on behalf of my neighborhood as others will do and we understand that a decision will have to take place prior to October 31. We will voice our concerns then and you will receive them in writing in addition to the ones you received today. Thank you.

Tom Coughlin, 605 Old Wellington Road, Manchester stated:

I am here to talk about the Wellington property as well. Pardon me but I am actually going to read off a paper. The City of Manchester has a \$650,000 budget shortfall that they are trying to solve by selling the Old Wellington Road property. I take issue with the apparent new policy that the City of Manchester has adopted regarding budget shortfalls. The fact that Manchester's governing body is proposing to sell property piece meal in order to balance the budget as opposed to addressing the fundamental issues behind the shortfalls indicates that there is a serious spending issue. I would request that the City seek an alternative policy for making up shortfalls. City owned land should be preserved for future parks and services for its citizens, not sold to make up for poor cash management. It is obvious based on the actions to date that the Old Wellington Road property is being fast tracked. In doing so I feel that the City is doing a great injustice to the citizens of Manchester and the surrounding abutters of this property. A fast track sale will result in variance changes on the property. A change in the zoning shows a lack of sensitivity for the longstanding residents of this community. I do not feel that the Board of Aldermen have been enough data to assess the environmental issues of building on wetlands fully understanding the quality of life that future tenants will have living practically under highways and on marshy land. In addition it has not been addressed as to who will pay for the required street improvements or the funding source of these improvements. Has the City performed a traffic census to take into account the impact of the City approved Mosque that will share the only access with this property plus the current 450 apartments that already use it? I submit these concerns to you today so that you can better be prepared when making a decision on the final outcome of the property. You are responsible to perform a certain level of due diligence before making a decision. I understand that you are being pressured to make this decision before the end of October. Please do not approve the development without first addressing the impact of these points and do not allow a budget date to take precedence over making an important decision.

William Clifford, 470 Old Wellington Road, Manchester stated:

I am also here to voice concerns about the sale of the property. Not so much about the sale of the property but what is going to be done with it and what kind of units are going to be built there. The other two gentlemen spoke about the traffic in that area. We only have one access road out to the main road and that is Eastern Avenue and right now that is over traveled. In the morning and in the afternoon during rush hour it is very difficult to get out of Eastern Avenue onto Wellington Road. If this property is sold and they put 100 units there we can safely assume there will be approximately 150 more vehicles. I understand that in the process there is a Mosque that is going to be built further up the hill, which will probably produce another 100 or 150 vehicles a day. I don't know how that area is going to handle it with just one access road. It is difficult enough now with the traffic coming up and down Eastern Avenue with just a stop sign there. A lot of people are just flying through there right now. Tom mentioned before about the other concerns. I won't be repetitive. A couple of years ago our property was revalued upwards considerably. Our taxes were increased considerably. I am concerned as well as some of the other homeowners in that area and there are only a few homeowners in that area. We are concerned about what kind of units will go up there and what that will do to the value of our property. As we sit here I am certain that our properties are not going to be devalued and our taxes are going to be decreased. We have a serious concern about what is going to be done with that property.

Toni Pappas, 432 Hanover Street, Manchester stated:

I am speaking tonight on behalf of the Vote No to Charter Revision Committee. We have a non-partisan committee, which is comprised of both Democrats as well as Republicans and we have taken a position of opposition to the proposed new Manchester City Charter. While we respect and admire the many hours of time and effort that the Charter Commissioners have put into the development of the proposed Charter we believe that since it can be only accepted or rejected in its entirety, we encourage Manchester citizens to vote no to the proposed Charter on November's ballot. Unlike the 1996 and present Charter, which is a result of systematic study and was recommended by an 8-1 vote, this Charter is the result of a process, which was flawed and only had a 5-4 vote. While there are some positive changes in the proposed Charter, which we support, they are outweighed with what we consider serious defects, which are a reason to vote no. For example, this Charter eliminates At-Large Aldermen and School Board members and discourages citizen participation and deprives the City of elected officials, which are answerable to the entire City. The proposed Charter also eliminates non-partisan elections and again we believe that reverting back to partisan elections is a setback to citizen participation and some of the other issues that we find disturbing in the proposed Charter is the change to the City's fallback budget. We feel that since this budget does not have escape clauses for bonding and incurred obligations the City could suffer serious damage through the loss of a high bond rating and it could not meet its legal obligations. We also are concerned about the inaugural date of the Mayor, Aldermen and other officials, which will take place two weeks after the November election rather than

in early January. We feel that it is very difficult for a person to learn about his or her new job when they only have two weeks and it is important for the taxpayers not to pay for someone who is learning on the job. In closing I thank you for your attention and urge all of you to please vote no on the proposed Charter on November's ballot. Thank you.

Keith Hirschmann, 296 Dunbarton Road, Manchester stated:

I am just a simple taxpayer just like everybody else. I think that my coming here tonight will give you a glimpse of what is on many people's minds throughout the community and I wish that more people would come down here and voice their voice. In an editorial dated September 30 in the *Union Leader* it talks about Sanborn Stadium, the very baseball stadium that you voted to bond with \$27.5 million of taxpayer dollars. As a taxpayer I am concerned. I am concerned with the revelation that you would pay a person who is supposedly an angel, a developer coming to our community, that you would have to pay this person \$400,000 to manage the project. I am disturbed by that as a taxpayer. Very disturbed. I know that when the civic center was built there was a construction manager hired to bring it in under the cost of \$50 million because that is a number that went to the people in a referendum. A referendum that was important to this community passed to have a civic center. When that passed all of the politicians got in line and today we have a civic center. It came in under budget with a construction manager paid considerably less than you people are paying this new person. I am a fifth generation Manchester resident. My great, great grandfather came here. My son is a resident as well so I guess he is sixth. I can't believe that \$400,000 would be made available to this person. Ron Johnson and Ron Ludwig are two of the finest people. When it came to managing the West Memorial development they were superb and I am shocked and disturbed that we are not utilizing these department heads to manage this project in a cheaper and more responsible fashion. Gill Stadium as well as the new baseball stadium. This could be done for a lot less money. Think of the taxpayers. We are the taxpayers. I really respect what you are doing but I want it done in a more fiscally responsible manner. Thank you.

Joe Kelly Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

I also am disturbed by the fact that we are paying the development of the baseball stadium money to develop the baseball stadium and I am also wondering why the guy who was a 30% owner in the baseball stadium now gave up his 30% ownership. If it was such a great deal why would anybody give up a 30% interest? It makes absolutely no sense. 57% of the people who came out to vote in this past primary said they wanted change at the level of the Mayor's position. 57% said they do not want Bob Baines as Mayor in the primary and the reasons are pretty clear. Spending has gotten out of control. 8% tax increase two years ago and 4.5% this year, 40% in water bills, 10% more to register your car...the City does not look clean, crime is not going down it is going up. We have had four budget requests by the Police shot down by this Mayor and the effects are all over this City. People are having their windows shot out. The neighborhoods are looking mangy. The West Side has gang related problems and you guys want to spend money on a baseball stadium and give some out-of-

towner that we don't know anything about who refuses to answer phone calls and refuses to be present at meetings \$400,000 of taxpayer's money. It just doesn't make any sense. I don't understand why we have the cloak and dagger closed door behind-the-scenes kind of management going on in this City. This is what we don't want here in government. We want open government. We want to know what is going on and we want questions answered. That is what the people of this City expect. 57% of you said no more Mayor Baines. I was one of them. Please people out there come out and get involved in this next election. Thank you very much.

There being no one else wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Smith it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Smith it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk